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HILLTOPICS

week of September 23, 2009

Vol: 6; Issue: 1

LET US NEVER FORGET NEW ORLEANS IN THE POST-KATRINA ERA

By: Jonathan Price

Last month marked the catastrophic impact of the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States—Hurricane Katrina. I do not think I will ever forget the scenes of that day as I witnessed on live television the storm hitting the city, the waters toppling and destroying levee after levee, the Coast Guard rushing frantically to contain the damage, and the chaos and mayhem ensuing shortly after this horrific tragedy.

While these scenes are ingrained in my mind due to a personal connection to the city, I fear that others have forgotten the tragedy and, much more importantly, the lessons that should be taken from it and the ongoing significance of the situation in New Orleans.

Many important lessons need to be taken from this disaster, the first of which is the poverty that it uncovered. Hurricane Katrina shined a spotlight on the poorest of our neighbors and showed America that it is nowhere close to equality, both in terms of race and opportunity. The world watched as hundreds of thousands of impoverished citizens were confined to cramped quarters, shipped to any city that would support them, and tragically lost due to dehydration, disease, flood waters, and an overall grossly inadequate response by all levels of the government to the storm. If anything, this should show us that if we care about those of our brothers and sisters stuck in crushing poverty and if we care about the senseless deaths of those same brothers and sisters, then we must push to erase the inequality of opportunity that clearly exists and fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Furthermore if we hope to avoid another tragedy such as this one then we must be better prepared both in resources and through our infrastructure for these catastrophes. This lesson we clearly have not learned, as demonstrated by the Minnesota bridge collapse, which was due to an incompetent and lazy federal bureaucracy that did not bother to fix the problems that they themselves saw in the infrastructure. And believe me, if we do not act and act quickly, more tragedies

due to our aging infrastructure will happen. Only we, the citizens, can push our government to act, and if we care anything at all, we must.

Finally we must still be conscious of the ongoing plight of those both in and displaced from New Orleans. Currently there are still thousands of displaced residents living in cramped, often dangerous trailers and thousands more left out on the street, unable to secure even a trailer to live in. Furthermore, while economic estimates of the damage settle around \$150 billion, not even including disruption of business, the federal government has provided only about \$105 billion in aid. Also, while the federal government had pledged to repair the levees, they are currently in an argument with the state of Louisiana as to who should actually pay for the repairs.

In a country as wealthy as the United States of America, we should not be wrestling with these issues. It should be common sense that our government provides the physical security promised to us by the Constitution and works to provide everyone with the equal opportunity to rise above their current status. Unfortunately, that is not the state of affairs in this country, and politicians are slow to act. Therefore it is our calling and our duty to urge our

leaders to stand up for the beliefs of our forefathers and learn from the mistakes of this tragedy.

Jonathan Price is a first year finance and political science double major and can be contacted through email (jdprice@smu.edu).



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A BAND CALLED "fun."**

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CLEAR SKIES AHEAD

STEP FORWARD IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

By: Cody Meador

On August 9, 2009, the *New York Times* reported that military and intelligence officials in the Pentagon and the State Department have recognized climate change as a threat to U.S. national security (1). This conclusion is based on complex studies and war games that reveal some of the challenges to U.S. security that may be posed by a changing climate. Droughts, pandemics, and storms could lead to food shortages and mass migrations, which in turn could upset entire governments or regions and strengthen terrorist efforts around the world. It sounds a little apocalyptic, but the threats are real. These things will not all directly affect the United States, but the fear is that they will affect preexisting situations abroad or create new situations in which the U.S. is obligated to intervene (for economic, humanitarian, or other reasons).

This declaration is as important as a challenge to U.S. security, and it marks a remarkable turnaround from the previous administration's viewpoint on climate change.

President Bush spent his eight years in the White House blurring the scientific arguments about climate change and staunchly opposing environmental policies, such as the Kyoto Protocol. But with this recent declaration from the State Department and Pentagon staff, the tides are turning – and not just in the United States. Australia was the only other industrialized nation to reject the Kyoto Protocol. After being sworn in on December 3, 2007, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd signed Kyoto as his first official act (2). Furthermore, Japan was originally in the U.S./Australia camp that opposed aspects of Kyoto, but the newly elected Democratic Party of Japan has vowed to ramp up efforts to cut emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, and talks to develop the next international climate agreement are set for December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark. President Obama has committed to attend and cooperate. The road is becoming paved for a new era in global cooperation on climate change. Several scholars have argued that Kyoto Protocol was severely weakened by U.S. negotiations to alter it and the eventual rejection of it by President Bush. The U.S. has the power to not only shape our path, but the path of the entire world on this issue. The importance is that it is a global issue that affects each and every one of us.

Because the position of the United States is so important to global action, grassroots actions at very local levels are also vitally important. With the hubbub over health care, climate change has gotten a lost in the static. While the Obama Administration continues to tout climate change as a top issue (3), it is important that those of us who are concerned and passionate about climate change make sure that the issue stays high on the public agenda, even at a local level. Just like saving pennies to make a dollar, local actions add up in support of national legislation. Additionally, the success of national legislation in the U.S. could have a potentially huge impact on the outcomes of the December talks in Copenhagen. If the U.S. has a defined course of action at home, it will more easily be able to negotiate and commit to a course at an international level.

Cody Meador is a senior Political Science Major and can be contacted through email (cmeador@smu.edu)

The Kyoto Protocol

Negotiated in Kyoto, Japan, December 1999

As of January 14, 2009, 183 countries had ratified the agreement

Five Main Principles

- commitments to reduce greenhouse gases that are legally binding for annex I countries, as well as general commitments for all member countries;
- implementation to meet the Protocol objectives, to prepare policies and measures which reduce greenhouse gases;
- increasing absorption of these gases and use all mechanisms available, such as joint implementation, clean development mechanism and emissions trading; being rewarded with credits which allow more greenhouse gas emissions at home;
- minimizing impacts on developing countries by establishing an adaptation fund for climate change; accounting, reporting and review to ensure the integrity of the Protocol;
- compliance by establishing a compliance committee to enforce compliance with the commitments under the Protocol.

1. Broder, John M, "Climate Change Seen as Threat to U.S. Security," *New York Times*, August 9, 2009.

2. "Australia Ratifies Kyoto Protocol," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 3, 2007.

3. Cowan, Richard, "Salazar Says U.S. Climate Bill High on Agenda," *Reuters*, September 8, 2009.

Do You CHOOSE THE SPORT OR DOES IT CHOOSE YOU?

By: Mary Fan

Playing sports at the professional level demands time and rigor that just do not cut it for a normal lifestyle. Time away from family, friends, and potential loved ones are the ultimate sacrifices one is forced to suffer. That is certainly true in the case of Wang Hao, a Chinese table tennis champion, who has finally been allowed to date—approved by the government at the age of twenty-five (Yahoo! News). I do not know which to find more shocking: that Hao was forbidden by the government to date until an age when most Chinese men are already preparing to marry or that his life was meticulously planned out by the government since the age of three.

I would say the latter, but the two are basically synonymous. In China, the government recruits children who show any Olympic potential to enter a strict regimen of physical (and mental) training. In exchange for free food, shelter, and clothes, all they have to do is win gold medals. Easier said than done. Seems to me like a basic case of “supply

and demand,” except that the scale is tipped heavily towards the former.

The athletes are virtually living on the government’s money, meaning they can spare their family the expenses of raising a child. However, the athletes leave their family behind at such a tender age that the only “family” they will probably ever have the privilege of knowing is their coaches and teammates. And, let’s face it, the road to fame and glory for athletes is a tough and unstable one, for they have to be the best if they wish to succeed. And in order to do so, they have to train endlessly, focusing on no one and nothing else but themselves.

It is no wonder the Chinese government bans its athletes to become romantically involved until they have reached their performance peak. Perhaps this way, the government will not have to worry about its investments jeopardizing their own careers. Luckily, Wang Hao has a girlfriend (who is also a former national teammate, I might add). As the girl’s coach quotes, “Both of them are old enough and it’s normal.” Seriously, *normal*? According to *The*

Social Science Journal, the average age for Chinese to first start dating is 18. Furthermore, the *Parenting Magazine* reveals that the average marrying age in China’s main cities is twenty-seven for women and twenty-eight for men. Thus, it’s somewhat safe to assume that men in China typically get married between the ages of twenty-seven and twenty-nine. What does that mean for Wang Hao—that he only has little more than two years to find the love of his life?

The heart of the matter comes down to this: is the athlete playing for himself or for others? Personally, I might never be able to reach this point of enlightenment because my tennis skills are nowhere near those of Roger Federer or the Williams sisters. However, I view athletes as well-oiled money machines, unless, that is, they are playing because they truly love the sport. Unfortunately, there is only room for one champion in the world of sports.

Mary Fan is a freshman Finance and Sociology double major and her email is mfan@smu.edu

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While nothing can really replace a paper copy, getting a free update on your iPhone is pretty close

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Hilltopics
Latest Issue: Summer 2009
From the Honors Director by Dr. David D. Doyle, Jr.
My Spring Break in New York City by Ashley M. Howe
Employers Getting Ready for "R..." by Marva McGrew
Conscientious Consumer Beware by Rachel Porter
KPNI SMU Radio Starts Living... by Thomas Dunlap
The Invisible Tweeter by Thomas Dunlap
'Hub of SMU Spirit' Needs Hub... by Ashley M. Howe
Defining Our Bike Community by Thomas Dunlap

Do you have an opinion about...

politics? music? class? television? football? shopping? intramurals? fraternities? movies? tests? the Mavs? club sports? sex? religion? driving? Umphrey Lee? technology? baseball? the weather? dating? books? nightclubs? the Daily Campus? pets? Texas? study abroad? sororities? news? the war? magazines?

or anything else?

we're listening at
amhowe@smu.edu

COMING TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU...

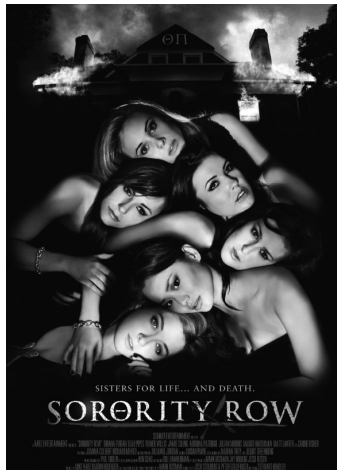
PREVIEW REVIEW OF ENTERTAINMENT'S NEXT BLOCKBUSTERS

If you've been lucky enough to visit New York City over the past summer you probably couldn't avoid catching a glimpse of various half-human, half-cyborgs staring tantalizingly past you. They're everywhere! On the subway, at bus stops, on top of cabs and glowing on the larger-than-life screens of Times Square, the *Surrogates* stare you down, imploring you to see the movie at the end of this month. An over-hyped summer movie season left a lot to be desired, but the year's not over yet and 2009 still has some serious potential. *Surrogates* might not be anything we haven't seen before but it promises sci-fi action and intrigue in yet another doomed and not-

so-distant future. But is that what people are looking for when they head into theatres? There's no doubt the recent vampire craze had incredible timing. For a generation caught between sex and violence vampires are the Holy Grail of entertainment trends. Obviously, TV series, books, magazines, and virtually every other pop culture and media outlet has exploited this obsession as much as possible. I even wonder if by the time *New Moon* hits theatres there will be much interest left. Luckily, die-hard fans of the book (and of its eye candy Robert Pattinson) will likely stay loyal beyond the end of the bloodsucking-mania.

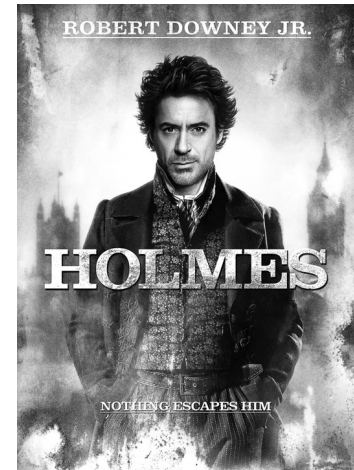


In recent years, Disney and Pixar have been ruling the family movie scene. They'd better look out for the release of *Where the Wild Things Are*. After turning down offers for almost 20 years, Maurice Sendak finally consented to Spike Jonze and allowed him to direct a movie version of the sensational children's book. The story celebrates the creative power of a child and the strange, beautiful and primitive nature of the imagination, and having now been translated into a feature film, it's an impending family classic. It certainly won't be typical- but it will be a welcome change from the computer animated soft films- and give parents a good amount to talk about. This film meets the need for a more honest story that understands a child's perception of all they see, both the real and imaginary.



Every year October comes and brings with it a barrage of "slasher" films: *Sorority Row* which will likely leave all the Greek sisters with guilty consciences checking their designer jeans filled closets before bed (you know who you are) lets *The Hills'* Audrina Patridge attract viewers before she attempts to burn down *Sorority Row*. I'm sure many SMU students will flock to see it as the film will be in theatres during our very own Greek Week.

Think about it, what do you want to see in films in the future? Production companies and studios would pay good money for those answers. Even so, it's likely they know better than you do and will be trying their hardest to give it to you.



A genre untapped for quite some time could mean box office gold. When Sherlock Holmes was first published in 1927 readers were fascinated by the idea of "mysteries", deduction, and even forensic science. Since then, thousands of books and television shows (including the classic "Scooby Doo") have been dedicated to this idea. However, when was the last time you saw an action packed mystery film? Chances are it's been a while. Audiences have become jaded by predictable endings and the element of mystery – mixed with modern action and even some elements of a period piece will draw many people into theatres and likely leave them satisfied and craving more surprises. Pending the overall success of this movie, there will likely be more detective films to come.

CHINA'S FIRST MARCH OF THE MILLENIUM

By: Mark Gelbart

Two hundred thousand people filled Tiananmen Square in Beijing the weekend of September 5, to prepare for the People's Republic of China's 60th birthday. Tanks will roll into Beijing again for this occasion, but unlike that fateful June night 20 years ago, they won't be blockaded by the remains of burned buses or a single man holding a plastic bag. Tiananmen Square will be a place of celebration where a military parade, a civilian pageant, and a nighttime gala will be held on the first of October to celebrate and reflect the progress the party-state has made in the last sixty years.

It was sixty years ago when Chairman Mao's peasant army entered the city of Northern Peace and restored its status to the Northern Capital, Beijing. On October 1, 1949, Mao and his comrades mounted the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen) and proclaimed the birth of a new dynasty, the People's Republic. After sixty years of communist rule, of which half were spent to advance Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the other half under Deng's "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics," the Chinese people, it seems, have finally "stood up" on the world's stage as their republic amassed one of the largest foreign currency reserves in the world through its red-hot export manufacturing industry and became the largest creditor of the United States of America.

Appearing for the first time in this massive military parade will be members of the Chinese Special Forces, elite fighters who specialize in dealing with threats of terrorism and other "special operations," and who briefly revealed themselves during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Anti-riot units of the People's Armed Police that appeared for the first time in the 1999 parade will appear again in this parade, likely with increased numbers or more advanced equipments to highlight paramilitary developments. These paramilitary "police officers" along with other soldiers, sailors, fighter pilots, and militia men and women will march across Tiananmen Square on the Chang'an Avenue following the People's Liberation Army Honor Guard. According to data obtained by

Central China Television (CCTV)'s military channel, the Honor Guard formation will march from one end of Tiananmen Square to the other in 8 minutes and 33 seconds with 991 steps, each 75 centimeters wide, to be first reviewed by leaders and other VIPs standing atop the Tiananmen Gate. Special training camps were set up in the suburbs of Beijing to condition the troops for this parade and to ensure that they will meet every standard down to the last detail.

The central figure in this entire celebration is President Hu Jintao. President Hu, who also holds the title of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, will deliver a speech on top of the Tiananmen Gate before stepping into an open top car to review the troops as Chairman of the Central Military while his eight colleagues from the Politburo Standing Committee, other senior party and military officials, party elders, and guests of honor watch on. To affirm General

Secretary Hu's leadership of the party, state, and the military, this massive event will feature new political slogans based on Mr. Hu's ideological contributions to the Chinese "Communist" ideology. New political catch-phrases such as "building a harmonious society" and "scientific development" will probably appear side by side with old favorites like "raise high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics" and must-haves like "people's army loyal to the party" to set the political atmosphere of this celebration. No doubt at the end



of the day when a massive display of fireworks – the likes of which the world has only seen during the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games – concludes a gala that marks the 60th birthday of the People's Republic, President Hu Jintao and the people will add the successful conclusion of this celebration to the long list of accomplishments that will make up Hu Jintao's legacy when he passes on the torch to the "Fifth Generation" of party leadership in 2012.

Mark Gelbart is a first year B.B.A. Finance and B.S. Economics major, minoring in Statistics and Chinese. He can be contacted by email through mgelbart@smu.edu. He also wishes to acknowledge Yuanzhuo Wang, an Economics major from Swarthmore College as a co-author to this piece.

POP MUSIC CAN BE fun.

By: Christine Ricciardi

I love pop music.

Since the millennium, this genre of music has developed a following of hipster haters. The boy bands and single, "innocent" ladies that defined the beginning of the decade shed light upon a plastic, hollow image of pop music. Britney Spears didn't write her own songs, Ashley Simpson didn't actually sing and The Backstreet Boys...well, enough said. At the time I embraced this and I loved this; however, my love for the pop music façade is what made me turn against mainstream artists like Rihanna and Jesse McCartney once I reached high school without giving them a chance. But, let's face it- I would never put on Katy Perry's album in my car, but I've been to enough frat parties to know every word "Hot N Cold."

Recently a lot of people just hate to love pop music. Perhaps, we've forgotten what pop music is: super catchy rhythms, simplistic beats and energetic tunes overridden by an absolutely distinguishable voice. Not to mention lyrics that are easily relatable to life. My favorite album this summer was a pop album, but nothing you will hear on FM 106.1. Instead, it marks the breach of a new generation of indie pop music.

Indie pop is no new phenomena; it escalated from bands like The Smiths to Belle and Sebastian. What I'm seeing is innovation on this genre by several bands that is repelling each into a completely different sound from one another. There's Ra Ra Riot, distinct for their incorporation of cello that makes every song flow like melted butter from the speakers, and Passion Pit, with their electro infusion. But one band is headed down Broadway.

New York based band fun. released their first album in August 2009 entitled "Aim and Ignite," a collection of songs so upbeat it could easily be the soundtrack to a musical. When you hear the opening song, "Be Calm," the beat so gradually picks up that you can see the stage curtain parting. Violins softly introduce the main character (voice of Nate Ruess of The Format) as he proceeds to describe the scene: "As I walk through the streets of my new city,

my back feeling much better I suppose." The music picks up about eight counts later with the word "suddenly" and hard drum cues. It's easy to picture the other people on stage twirling around trying to find their places to for the next act. The following song builds off the first and Ruess' voice immediately explodes, backed up by a choir, the title to the song, "Holy Ghost... when do you come out to play? Cause if the Lord is gonna find me, he better start lookin' today!" The album continues in this fashion, each song taking on more animation.

What makes fun's album unique is their lack of emphasis on any one instrument. There are no solos and the only break downs include clapping; you know, the kind that depends on audience participation. A perfect example is the third track, "All The Pretty Girls," where nothing but choreographed clapping and singing denote the climax of the song.

However, just because the tunes to their songs are poppy, don't be fooled into thinking every song is as happy as it sounds. Take, for instance, the first song made available on iTunes, "At Least I'm Not As Sad (As I Used To Be)." This pop ballad that could be the anthem to a nutcracker march has the most depressing and nostalgic lyrics on the album that explore the past of the band members after running into old friends. At one point female voice asks, "Come on, can you count all the loves that didn't last?"

Toe tapper "Walking the Dog" is full of self doubt when Ruess chants, "If you could see me, whoever I am. It's not like a movie; it's not all skin and bones." Even the album finale, "Take Your Time (Coming Home)," which resembles something out of the Lion King at first, is an argument masked by energy and peppy piano sequences.

So there is hope for pop music yet! Fun. "Aim and Ignite" will reinstall your faith in the genre that has turned off so many music lovers. It is genuine and unprecedented; hands down, the best album of the year.

Christine Ricciardi is a senior Journalism and Spanish double major and can be reached at cricciar@smu.edu

MUSIC

SPOTLIGHT



ARTIST: fun.

ALBUM:

"AIM AND IGNITE"

RELEASE DATE:

AUGUST 25, 2009

BASED IN:

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

DISCOGRAPHY:

1. "BE CALM"
2. "BENSON HEDGES"
3. "ALL THE PRETTY GIRLS (ON A SATURDAY NIGHT)"
4. "I WANNA BE THE ONE (BaBaBa)"
5. "AT LEAST I'M NOT AS SAD (AS I USED TO BE)"
6. "LIGHT A ROMAN CANDLE WITH ME"
7. "WALKING THE DOG"
8. "BARLIGHTS"
9. "THE GAMBLER"
10. "TAKE YOUR TIME (COMING HOME)"
11. "WALKING THE DOG II"
12. "TAKE YOUR TIME (ACOUSTIC)"

BAND MEMBERS:

NATE RUESS

JACK ANTONOFF

ANDREW DOST

PREVIOUSLY TOURED WITH:

JACK'S MANNEQUIN

A BRIEF GLANCE BACK

By: Jack Swearingen

Somewhere along the journey of our life, we come across precious moments where the constant melee of change and progress gives way to introspective reflection, attempting to penetrate the surface of our existence and struggle towards something more real. Chances are, though, starting class a few weeks ago at SMU did not strike you as one of those moments. But perhaps it should have. While being at university offers us wonderful opportunities to grow intellectually and socially, it also presents us with one of the few vital moments of pause which allow us to take into account the scattered memories of our past and reconcile them with who we are today, and who we wish to become in the future.

The simple fact of the matter is that the logistics of college- saying goodbye to high school friends, moving out of our parents' homes, and living in a place that reminds us of neither - lend to us an opportunity to fundamentally change who we are. Whatever our flaws were, be it in the distant past or in memories still fresh on our minds, we do not have to be the people we were. It is cliché and foolish to say that every day is a new opportunity because it is not. The actions of yesterday largely decide what happens today, what happens today will greatly limit tomorrow's possibilities, and tomorrow will bleed into the day after that - and for the majority of our lives we will wallow in the triumph and folly of the previous day without any hope of rising above and forging a world anew. But there will be moments of calm. There will be moments when the chains of justification are forced asunder, and we stand in a vacuum of events; it is then, in those moments, that we may turn back and gather the fragments of our past



into a coherent whole. What we gain from that brief glance back is the past and the ability to have a meaningful future; we abandon the hedonistic calculus of vain pleasures and drunken weekends and seek something larger than ourselves for which we neither have to abandon our individuality nor stand alone in the dark. Our emergence into college life, no matter our age, is one such moment.

This journey through the mind is one that this writer is currently undergoing, the conclusion of which could lead him anywhere. The simplicity of the argument lies in the fact that if we wish to, in any way, alter or modify who we are now, we must realize who we used to be, and then decide what to do about it. Beginning with any memory we can remember, whether it is from our earliest childhood or from just a few moments ago, it is vital for the well being of our inner self to sift through the memories and emotions we contain in the hidden labyrinths of our mind and to realize their impact or their frivolity. Far too often we wait until we are old and dying to begin sorting through our lives and decide what it really meant for us to be alive - too late for us to learn from this and adjust accordingly. The

beauty of self-reflection is that once again we can relive in our minds the unbridled exhilaration of those warm summer nights of our high school days, the simple joys of our childhood, and at times the painful moments where we earned through strife a sense of our own frailty and mortality. But whether our past is good or bad, memorable or monotonous, it is life, and, no matter what, life is the most beautiful thing we have.

The advice to review your past to decide your own future is not a notion in the latest spew of self-help books or soft-science psychological techniques to make you a well-adjusted person, but rather this serves as a deeper, more intrinsically valuable process that can give a sense of meaning to your past and direction to your goals and dreams in the present. In a city as big as Dallas and on a campus as diverse as SMU, it is easy to lose the definition of who you are. You find yourself within yourself, and yourself within the memories of time gone by.

Jack Swearingen is a first year political science and philosophy double major. He can be reached at jswearinge@smu.edu.

THUMBS UP

Bonding over TV shows
Labradoodles
Cooler weather
Mac's Place
All the experience you
gain as a freshman



THUMBS DOWN

Construction seems to
never go away on campus.
Homework. Duh!!
Del Potro
Kayne West
Swine Flu (It's Still Here!!!)
All the weight you gain as
a freshman



CAMPUS EVENTS

Human Rights Education Program Series

Now Until November
23

SMU Classic (Men's Soccer)

HBU vs. Missouri
State

SMU vs. UAB
September 25

Race Judicata 5K Fun Run

October 3

SMU Football at TCU

October 3

National Performing and Visual Arts College Fair

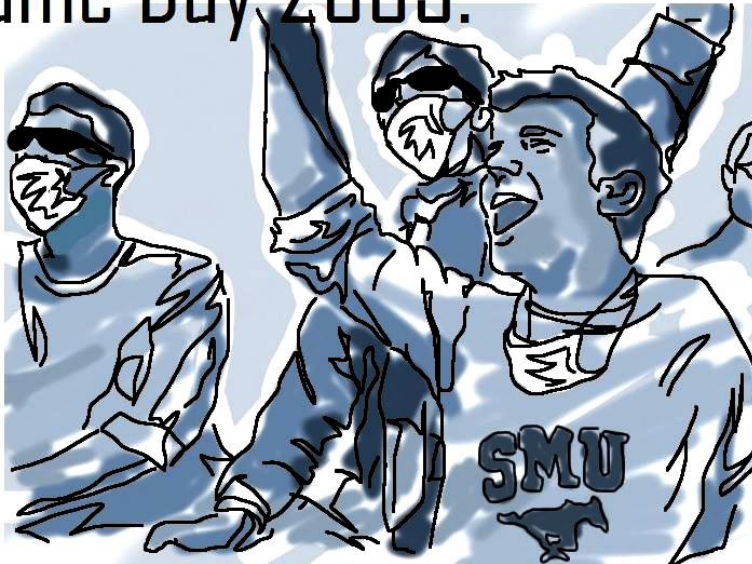
September 29

Mustang Corral Reunion 2009

September 23

Want to Have YOUR
Organization's Event Placed
Here? Email aoldham@smu.edu
and Tell Us What's Going on in
Your World!

Game Day 2009:



Comic by Savannah Niles

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